"To promote Christian ideals for agriculture and rural life; to interpret the spiritual and religious values which inhere in the processes of agriculture and the relationships of rural life; to magnify and dignify the rural church; to provide a means of fellowship and cooperation among rural agencies: *Toward a Christian Rural Civilization.*"

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MY PHILOSOPHY OF RURAL LIFE

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Introduction: The title of this paper, MY PHILOSOPHY OF RURAL LIFE, may lead the hearer to anticipate a juicy morsel from the speaker's inner experience, - something after the manner of De Quincy's CONFESSIONS OF AN OPIUM EATER; or, the avowal of an unpopular creed, like John Henry Newman's APOLOGIA PRO VITA SUA (Defence of His Own Life); more likely, however, just another romance, like Sir Thomas More's UTOPIA. As a matter of fact, I am not going to break the suspense by pleading guilty beforehand to any of these surmises. I do reserve the right to present a personal view of rural life, - my view. I also claim the privilege of being serious. However much it is in vogue these days to ridicule philosophy, philosophy does still imply an attempt to separate the wheat from the chaff. If I give way to a strain of romantic sentiment about rural life, I claim some indulgence, on the ground that I come of a long line of farmers, who, since 1650 in the Colonies, both in Virginia and in other states, have lived the life we discuss today.

By way of further introduction, I wish to acquaint you with a peculiar repugnance of mine, which you will of course consider a bias and duly allow for in your final judgment. My special antipathy, to be perfectly candid with you, is, in the struggles of men, to see wealth, either public or private, made the great goal of living at the sacrifice of personality. I have an abhorrence of money-making, for example, at the expense of character; an abhorrence of the continued accumulation of family property, while the family is left intellectually impoverished. I hate to see a public regime under which wealth-getting stands in the foreground, and men, women, and children, - their human values and character interests and satisfactions - stand in the background. To illustrate this antipathy a little further, in the field of agriculture, I look with a great deal of suspicion upon the demand for "corporation farming". The intellectual atmosphere out of which emanates this cry for "corporation farming", "large-scale farming" for "mass production" is highly charged, I fear, with desire for the creation and amassing of wealth, without due respect to the effect upon the personalities of the farmers involved. My inclination to question every profit-making scheme, put up to farmers on the plea of sound economics, - question it, I say, until it is clear that the human beings involved in the venture will not suffer in mind, body, or soul, is a cause of some embarrassment to me with you today. Now let me jump into the middle of my theme.

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*This address by Dr. Charles Josiah Galpin was delivered at the Institute of Rural Affairs, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, August 1, 1930. At that time Dr. Galpin was Principal Agricultural Economist in the Division of Farm Population and Rural Life, U. S. Department of Agriculture. The Christian Rural Fellowship desires to express to Dr. Galpin, now retired, its appreciation for permission to reprint the address in this form and to make acknowledgment of the great contribution he has made to a better understanding of the abiding values in rural living.

I.

My General Formula for Rural Life.

Agriculture is and has been the occupation of the yeoman type of man, - the commoner, the ordinary run of men and women of normal, all-round instincts and abilities. Agriculture has always been, still is in fact, and probably always will be, an occupation of moderate economic reward. Manual labor in farming is mixed with intellectual effort. This will probably always be the case, in spite of the "machine age" appearing on the horizon of agriculture. My philosophy embraces all these normal instinctive characteristics of farmers dressed in the costume of moderation. I see, therefore, in the farmer of the future, no great essential change in character, behavior, or satisfactions. Being just a run-of-the-mine man, a generic racial pattern, perhaps the most typical man any occupation produces, the farmer will live a life on the broadest base of experience that life presents. We may expect that the normal instincts of the race will appear fulfilled in him, in regard to variety and average intensity. Just because the farmer is a normal, generic, broad-based type, there are certain qualities which we shall hardly see fulfilled in the farmer, and the absence of these qualities must be included in my philosophy. Let me enumerate a few of these.

1. Farming will not be the occupation of those who aim at great wealth. The millionaire is an industrialist.

2. Farming is hardly compatible with the highly specialized aptitude of genius, whether of a scientific, artistic, or ethical nature. Robert Burns was a poor specimen of farmer; leaving the farm, he became a great poet.

3. Farming is not adapted to celibates, those who do not marry. Celibacy is an abnormality, or a speciality. Asceticism of any kind is not farm-bred. Neither is epicurism, on the other hand. The farmer takes his pleasure in small doses as he goes along in connection with his routine life. Moderation is the keynote of agriculture.

From the basic character of the farmer, I make a very important reference. I deem it folly to attempt to convert farm people into personalities that, for their inner satisfactions and contentments in life, depend upon the social activities of cities. The American city is the habitat of exceptional or specialized, or under-normalized individuals and is run in their interest. The city, in its institutional adjustment to city people, has built up varieties of recreational relief for its workers, varieties of educational and social activities, especially adapted to characteristics of city people. There are points of difference in the facilities, appliances, and modes of activity utilized in each type of behavior. To urbanize the farmer in his own habitat, is simply to take the first step to remove him from his natural setting, that is, to destroy him as a farmer. The values of farm life and labor are conditioned by a mode of experience and joy of living, which naturally dry-up and wilt under ultra city ideals. If, for example, farm youth are taken with the glamor of the untrammeled unmarried life of many city men and women, they are so far unfitted for farm life. If the every-minute daintiness of city apparel haunts the farm girl, she so far becomes unfitted to take her part in a life

where special daintiness can be only occasional. With this general statement or formula of my philosophy of rural life, let me consider the matter more particularly from several points of view.

II.

From the Point of View of Professional Workers for Agriculture.

My philosophy of rural life would restrain economists, extension workers, and other professionals in the field of agriculture from carrying the economics of city industry over bodily to agriculture. The economics of the city factory is adapted to factory workers who are satisfied to do each a special little part of a whole task. They are willing to do this small part of a joint task under control, differing little from military control; they get relatively a high wage; live their life out of work hours as independently as possible, to compensate for a very dependent military obedience in work hours.

The farm and the factory differ essentially at the point of freedom. If the economist makes a factory out of land for crop and animal production, introducing military control with large-scale units, piece work, specifications, he destroys the peculiar character of the yeoman, the man who owns himself, directs himself; and has a judgment based upon independence.

Therefore, I would say, let the economist of agriculture begin his plans with a thorough consideration of the human factor, its limitations and ideals, and fit his economic schemes to the character of the farmer.

III.

From the Point of View of the Sociologist of Rural Life.

My philosophy calls upon the sociologist of rural life to aim at the establishment and development of a rural culture and rural civilization which shall be in thorough harmony with the life of the yeoman, a very general type of human being who creates a society whose flower is the family. To socialize the farmer out of family life is to destroy the yeoman, and to substitute something again like another city type of civilization for the most precious element of human living. I have no fear of this blunder on the part of the sociologist, if he gives due weight to the character of the farmer, as influenced by his contacts with land, sky, sweet air, sunshine, great spaces, love of growing things, love of animals, - in fine to the farmer's cooperation with nature. The sociologist will seek to give the farmer and his family such access to group life as will enrich, carry on to fulfillment, the life and behavior of the farmer, but in no sense tend to uproot the farmer, destroy his character, and adapt him to another habitat and mode of life. Great scope exists for social contacts in farm life, which, however, hold the family securely at the center. The true rural sociologist will be glad to see the farmer breathe his native country air; he will not attempt to make him over

socially in order that he may breathe the air of cities, like one to the manner born.

IV.

From the Point of View of the Statesman.

Statesmen must give rural living a chance for its own kind of life. Rural life is not be to exploited by statesmen either for mass production, or cheap food, or cheap labor. The right to a high point of development within his own medium of work and living is manifestly due the farmer from the statesman, wherever legislation touches the farmer. The statesman will admit a difference between farmer and city man, but not a difference of inferiority for the farm and superiority for the city. I have never admitted that the farmer is an inferior human being. The worth of the farmer to the nation will be held in the mind of the statesman; not only his mechanical value as a good producer, but his intrinsic worth as the bulwark of the commoner, the independent thinker, the yeoman. Not only will the statesman recognize the farmer's value as an independent political conservative; but he will recognize his family ideal as the social rock upon which the nation rests. The biological significance to the nation of the farmer's family, and the socio-psychic value of his family life will never desert the true statesman's judgment. If the city is doomed to destroy human beings in its processes, and not to produce them, as at present is the case in American cities, then the farmer becomes the father of his country, and the farm woman becomes the mother of the nation. There seems little remedy for doom to the city as a biological center of the nation. The very nature of the city, - its work, its high cost of space, dooms it as a birthplace. The father and mother of the nation live on the farm; and statesmen must recognize this fact or go wrong as leaders of national thought.

V.

From the Point of View of the Farmer.

My philosophy of rural life, envisages the farmer as a bitter-end resister to all attempts of benevolent agencies to metamorphose him, a child of nature, into a creature of urban habits, under any plea, especially the plea of efficient mass production and a creator of mere wealth. The farmer still instinctively holds precious his freedom in work and in life. He will be the first to doubt the sanity of giving up management of his little farm for the promise of high wages in an industrialized, militarized farm. He will be the first to see the demotion in being reduced to the level of a hired man, when asked to join the collective farming corporation. In fact, the farmer's slow acceptance of social reforms grows out of his determination to preserve his main qualities and live and work in character.

After watching for twenty years the resistance of the ordinary farmer to the benevolent attempts of many to make him a rich man, I am ready to be

thankful for his slowness to give in to the schemers who besiege him in his own interest.

VI.

From the Point of View of the Farm Woman.

I have called the farm woman the mother of the nation. My philosophy of rural life holds to that statement. It is not so much now that I call upon all to honor her for this; but it rather is that I call upon all to recognize this function of the farm woman, in order that this function be enriched, assisted, fulfilled, and not destroyed. If you persist in urbanizing the farm woman, you in reality are by so much withdrawing from her her present proud distinction.

She cannot accept the lure of the city, its ideals, adaptations, limitations, and remain the bulwark of the family. Fill her mind with love of the treasures of art, - the things made by man out of insensate materials - and she will wane in love of the treasures of living children; for where her treasure is, there will her heart be also. This is not to discredit art; but it is to say that a profound gulf lies between the art of things and the art, so to speak, of persons. Choose, the woman must, - to be happy in helping create children, or to be happy in creating things. The genius of the farm is its relation to life; the genius of the city is its relation to things. The farm breathes of nature; the city sticks out with art. The farm woman is a nature woman; the city woman is an art woman. Each has her place and function. But the farm woman resists being made into a city woman. And well she may, for her part already is a noble one, - mother of the nation.

Conclusion: I believe in the farmer, in the farm woman, and in the farm child. They are a base from which races spring, just as the earth is a base from which all things spring. I believe in the farm family, as a group out of which springs spontaneously the best we know in socialization. I believe in a rural culture of its own kind, designed to preserve the farmer and his family in their role. I believe in keeping the farmer liberty-loving, free, independent, so far as may be consistent with a free cooperation by understanding and agreement with his fellows. I believe in a machine farming which does not destroy the farmer in creating production. I believe in many small farms, as well as many large farms; for I remember that the farmer of small circumstances wants a farm of his own, and many farm-minded, domestic men and women, even though they carry on an occupation outside of farming, cherish the small farm as a habitat for the family. I believe in a high standard of living for farmers, measured in terms of real comfort for man, woman and child, as well as in health, useful knowledge, and leisure. I believe in the American type of farmer, whose freedom is above that of the European peasant. The freedom of the American farm woman to develop the home rather than to be bound to the field and the stall is the best index that America has forever rejected peasantry. I believe in the education and schooling of farm children to a point as high as is consistent with their constructive role and function in the nation. I believe in farm science and homemaking for the farmer and his wife and children. I believe in a free play in agriculture

and country life for human motives other than the profit-making motives, - for motives of pure sentiment, family history, prestige and pride; for motives of patriotism, and love of locality, landscape, horizon; for motives of religion, and self-sacrificing duty to community. I believe in protecting farmers from political and economic subjection. The cry for "cheap food" is a danger signal of exploitation. I believe in the farmer's understanding the social ways of men, how human society functions and how legislation and economic control come about among men in both city and country. So the farmer shall not be outwitted by sharpers in the name of politics, business, or patriotism.

When the fancy of men breaks out in screeds about the national waste that is present in the family type of farms and praises the economic glories of great corporation farming, I smile a smile of sympathy; for I, too, have indulged my fancy, in the matter of farming, anticipating the period some hundreds of years hence when crops shall be grown automatically under a roof, with artificial watering, artificial sunshine, and artificial fooding of plants with specialized plant soups made from soils; for soil is after all for plants only a bargain pile of semi-assorted food. It does seem anomalous to make the plant or the wheat plant go on hunts underground, pasturing for their food through rootlet mouths at the end of a tight root tether. The use of the soil to support the anchored plant may theoretically be done away, and then a system of feeding, forced feeding of plants under roofs, by streams of soups flowing into their open mouths, would transform farming into an actual life factory.

This fancy of mine, when put into practice, to save the population of the world forsooth, will transform the farmer; but I am sure that you and I need not now figure out the changes to rural life under this fanciful regime. Nor need we take very seriously yet corporation farming, that other fanciful scheme of business thinkers. What we must take seriously is our own attempts to make something also out of the farmer than a farmer. I believe in the pride of a farmer at being a farmer. Let him have as good a single-family house as science can design, but don't set up apartment hotels and tenements in rows for farmers, as I have seen on certain great estates. Let him have his great consolidated school and high school; but train his children to habits of thought which support rural society. Don't let rural schools undermine the farm, and cause the farm woman to abandon the family ideal. My philosophy of rural life, in a nutshell, is this: The nation is always in sore need of yeomanry, independent, generic, potent. Build up the farmer where he is on his yeoman base. In attempts to improve your yeoman, don't so metamorphose him that you destroy him.

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